

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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TAGS: ECON, APER, JO

SUBJECT: NEED FOR COMMERCIAL OFFICER POSITION IN AMMAN

REF: 1977 AMMAN 8083

1. AS DEPARTMENT NEARS DECISION ON RELATIVE NEEDS OF VARIOUS POSTS THAT MAY BE UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR RE-PROGRAMMED COMMERCIAL OFFICER POSITIONS, WE SUBMIT FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT OUR E/C SECTION. WE HOPE THIS INFORMATION WILL BE USEFUL CONTRIBUTION TO DEPARTMENT DECISION PROCESS.

2. AT PRESENT, COMMERCIAL OFFICE IS BARELY ABLE TO HANDLE INCREASE IN ROUTINE WORK THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE SINCE LATE 1975 WHEN THE THEN SEPARATE ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL FUNCTIONS WERE BROUGHT TOGETHER INTO SINGLE SECTION WITH ECONOMIC OFFICER AS CHIEF. THE FOLLOWING STATISTICS ARE ILLUSTRATIVE OF CHANGED SITUATION.

1975 1977

RESIDENT AMERICAN BUSINESS

OFFICER IN AMMAN 5 36

VISITORS TO THE COMMERCIAL OFFICE 549 1237

OUTGOING ECON/COML TELEGRAMS 116 477

WTDR'S SENT OUT 35 73

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ECON/COML AIRGRAMS 35 45

TRADE OPPORTUNITIES DEVELOPED 5 18

3. MISSION HAS NO CURRENT COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY PLANNING DOCUMENT. OUR FIRST INFORMAL ATTEMPT, MADE IN EARLY 1976, WAS ABANDONED WHEN IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THE COMMERCIAL OFFICE WOULD BE UNABLE TO DO MUCH MORE THAN

RESPOND TO OUTSIDE REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE.
(IN THIS SITUATION, PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION
OF CAP OR CCP IS COMPLETELY OUT OF QUESTION.)
INTERPRETIVE REPORTING ON COMMERCIAL PROSPECTS AND
ACTIVITY AND BUSINESS CLIMATE AND OPPORTUNITIES HAS
BEEN PREPARED BY ECONOMIC OFFICER OR, IT HAS BEEN DEFERRED
INDEFINITELY. TWO SUCH PROJECTS, INCLUDED IN THE
MISSION STATEMENT OF "GOALS AND OBJECTIVES" HAVE NOT YET
BEGUN. ADDITION OF A COMMERCIAL OFFICE WOULD
PERMIT DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A COUNTRY
COMMERCIAL STRATEGY, ALLOW PURSUIT OF THE MISSION
COMMERCIAL OBJECTIVES AND FREE THE ECONOMIC OFFICER
FROM MOST OF HIS PRESENT COMMERCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES
TO CONCENTRATE MORE FULLY ON OUR ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES
(SINCE EARLY 1976, OUR LEVEL OF ECONOMIC REPORTING
HAS REMAINED APPROXIMATELY CONSTANT, BUT COMMERCIAL
AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS NOW REPRESENT 2/3 OF THE
ECONOMIC OFFICER'S OUTGOING TELEGRAPHIC TRAFFIC).

4. TWO MISSION OBJECTIVES WHICH ARE RESPONSIBILITY
OF ECON OFFICER REQUIRE THAT HE BE AVAILABLE FULLTIME
TO CONCENTRATE ON ECONOMICS. HOWEVER, IN ADDITION
TO PREPARING ALL INTERPRETIVE COMMERCIAL MATERIAL,
HE ALSO HAS VIRTUALLY SOLE RESPONSIBILITY, AND VERY
LIMITED TIME, FOR CARRYING OUT THE MISSION RESPONSIBILITIES
REGARDING THE ARAB BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL, WHICH
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SHOULD BE A COMMERCIAL OFFICER'S FUNCTION. WEAKNESS
IN STAFFING OF COMMERCIAL OFFICE THEREFORE COM-
PROMISES OUR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE NO LESS THAN FOUR
STATED MISSION OBJECTIVES AND TO PERFORM STANDARD
COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY PLANNING EXERCISE.

5. INFORMATION COMPILED BY DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE IN-
DIATES THAT FOR FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 1977 JORDAN'S
IMPORTS FROM UNITED STATES ARE RUNNING 27 PERCENT HIGHER
THAN FOR SAME PERIOD IN 1976, WHEN TOTAL IMPORTS
FROM U.S. EQUALLED \$234 MILLION. WE DO NOT WISH
TO SUGGEST THAT JORDAN IS OR WILL BECOME HIGHLY
IMPORTANT US MARKET, BUT SURELY IT IS WORTH MORE
ACTIVE INTEREST ON PART OF US THAN IT IS NOW GIVEN.
IT MAY ALSO BE WORTH NOTING THAT STARTING IN 1975,
WEST GERMANY DISPLACED US AS JORDAN'S PRIMARY TRADING
PARTNER.

6. FINALLY, BECAUSE OF LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY'S
INTEREST AND INFLUENCE IN POLITICAL LIFE AND ECONOMIC
POLICY DECISIONS IN JORDAN, INCREASED ATTENTION TO
THIS SECTOR OF JORDANIAN SOCIETY WOULD SUPPORT OTHER

SUBSTANTIVE ACTIVITIES OF MISSION.

7. REQUEST APPROVAL FOR ADDITION OF COMMERCIAL OFFICER SLOT
AT 0-5 LEVEL, WITH ARRIVAL OF INCUMBENT THIS SUMMER.
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